United Nations E/CN.17/2004/7/Add.1

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
6 February 2004

Original: English

Commission on Sustainable Development
Twelfth session
14-30 April 2004
Item 3 of the provisional agenda

Report of the Africa Regional Implementation Review Meeting to the twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development on water, sanitation and human settlements

I. Introduction

1. In preparation for the twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, a regional implementation forum was held in Addis Ababa from 8 to 12 December 2003 to review progress in implementation of Agenda 21,[1] the Habitat Agenda[2] and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation,[3] adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The deliberations at the meeting focused on water, sanitation and human settlements. An overall review of progress in implementation was undertaken, including the identification of constraints, opportunities and challenges facing African countries in these areas. The deliberations brought into sharp focus the water and sanitation crisis in Africa, as well as the challenge of rapid urbanization, as highlighted in Agenda 21 and at the World Summit. While the review showed progress in implementation, it also highlighted the inability of some African countries to meet their goals and targets in the areas of water, sanitation and human settlements.

2. The meeting recalled the commitments undertaken by African countries, including in the Africa Water Vision, the Millennium Development Goals, the Habitat Agenda, the Declaration on Cities and other Human Settlements in the New Millennium,[4] and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. The meeting also recalled African Union decision Assembly/AU/Dec.29(11) on promoting the development of sustainable cities in Africa, adopted at its second ordinary session at Maputo in July 2003, and reaffirmed the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as the sustainable development framework for Africa.

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II. Water and sanitation

Achievements

3. The meeting noted the achievements of African countries in the field of water and sanitation, including the following:

- Implementation of several international agreements and goals on water and sanitation
- Prominence of water and sanitation on development agendas for poverty eradication
- Stronger focus on water and sanitation in national policy formulation
- Increased cooperation at the subregional level and the creation of high-level forums at the regional level, such as the African Ministerial Council on Water

Constraints and obstacles

4. The meeting identified the following constraints and obstacles to implementation:

- Low capacity for implementation, monitoring and evaluation of progress
- Inadequate level of investment for access to safe water and sanitation
- Insufficient planning for disaster (drought/floods) preparedness
- Low level of integrated planning for the provision of decent shelter with basic water and sanitation services, including for people in conflict areas
- Insufficient capacity at the local government level to plan and deliver water and sanitation services
- Low level of integration between programmes for health and hygiene education and the delivery of water and sanitation services
- Unsustainable and inefficient use of resources
- Difficulty in mobilizing resources to implement long-term plans
- Vulnerability of African countries to global environmental changes
- Inability to manage rapid urbanization
- HIV/AIDS pandemic, malaria, tuberculosis and other communicable and non-communicable diseases

Possible approaches and lessons learned

5. The meeting identified possible approaches, including:

- Need to highlight water and sanitation in the poverty reduction strategy papers of the World Bank and other national development strategies
- Linking water and sanitation to education and health and human settlements
- Establishing innovative and accountable partnerships with private sector, civil society organizations and other relevant stakeholders

- Closer collaboration among African non-governmental organizations to assist capacity-building and resource mobilization
- Promoting the use of appropriate technology in water conservation, rainwater harvesting, sanitation, solid waste and wastewater treatment to increase access to safe water and adequate sanitation and housing
- Promoting integrated land use and development planning to optimize capacity and resource utilization
- Increasing investment in research and development in water and sanitation
- Increasing government financing to improve access to water and sanitation
- Closer alignment of sectoral policies and programmes to NEPAD activities and other development processes
- Promotion of regional and international cooperation for better water management and conflict prevention through trust and confidence-building.

III. Human settlements

Achievements

6. The meeting noted the achievements by African countries in the field of human settlements, including the following:

(a) Adequate shelter for all:

- Improved access to land and secure tenure
- Enhanced planning and management for sustainable land-use policies
- Provision of infrastructure and basic services
- Improvement of the lives of slum dwellers through slum upgrading programmes and projects
- Implementation of the Sustainable Cities Programme for sustainable human settlements within national development strategies
- Implementation of local Agenda 21 projects
- Promotion of good urban governance

(b) Energy and transport in human settlements:

- Promotion and provision of access to energy and its diversification and mainstreaming of energy efficiency measures in the housing sector
- Construction and rehabilitation of roads
- Promotion of different modes of transport, including non-motorized transport

(c) Provision of resources for implementation:

- Establishment of national housing funds and other mechanisms to finance housing in many countries
- Promotion of informal credit services for housing

Constraints and obstacles

7. The meeting identified constraints and obstacles to implementation, including:

- Inadequate means of implementation, including lack of financial resources, increasing debt burden, inadequate technology transfer and poor donor response
- Rising poverty, especially urbanization of poverty
- Slow progress in good governance and prevalence of conflicts and civil unrest
- Prevalence of both communicable and non-communicable diseases
- Limited or lack of lending institutions for the financing of low-income housing
- Slow pace of economic growth and vulnerability of African economies to external shocks
- Weak institutional capacity in African countries
- Inadequate access to land for human settlements
- Weak regulatory and administrative frameworks
- Inadequate enabling environment for participation of private sector
- Non-involvement and/or lack of capacity in local authorities to undertake the expanded developmental role in management of human settlements
- Poor human settlements planning
- Limited participation and involvement of civil society in human settlements development
- Slow pace of decentralization
- Natural and man-made disasters
- The impact of urbanization on the African river basins, and its effect on water demand management

Challenges

8. The meeting identified challenges to implementation, including:

- Inability to manage rapid urbanization
- Transforming African cities into assets for sustainable development
- Mobilization of domestic resources for human settlements development
- Empowering local government and strengthening the relationship with civil society in implementing and managing human settlements programmes
- Empowering women and youth and encouraging gender mainstreaming in human settlements

Possible approaches and lessons learned

9. The meeting identified possible approaches, including:

- Need for inspiring and committed leadership

- Need for innovative and accountable partnerships, broad participation by all stakeholders and learning from best practices
- Focus on slum upgrading, using local resources and technology and focusing on employment creation as a point of departure to achieve the goals and objectives of local Agenda 21, the Habitat Agenda, the Millennium Development Goals, the Johannesburg Programme of Implementation and NEPAD
- Importance of recognizing the role of the informal sector in the development of policy and long-term economic planning
- Complementary and integrated approaches to promote and implement sustainable human settlements
- Need to enhance and strengthen subregional and interregional cooperation in the development of sustainable human settlements

IV. Recommendations

10. The meeting made the following recommendations to:

(a) **Ensure the translation of international commitments into national policies, programmes and strategies and the acceleration of service delivery in water, sanitation and human settlements;**

(b) **Significantly increase the proportion of national, provincial and municipal budgets to provide water, sanitation and human settlements to the poor and to demonstrate commitment;**

(c) **Utilize integrated water resource management as a framework for implementation, and to this end prepare integrated water resources management strategies by 2005;**

(d) **Implement catchment conservation and water demand management to mitigate degradation of water and related land resources, and optimize available resources and infrastructure in both rural and urban settings;**

(e) **Initiate the devolution of water resource management to catchment-based institutions, where appropriate;**

(f) **Devolution of power and resources to local governments and improvement of their capacity to plan, manage, monitor and evaluate water, sanitation and human settlements;**

(g) **Increase investment in monitoring, assessment and information systems to underpin integrated water resource management;**

(h) **Promote water, sanitation and shelter as basic needs and fundamental human rights;**

(i) **Increase the efficient use of national, local and urban indicators in the area of human settlements development and management, as well as other sources of data, including proxy indicators;**

(j) **Mainstream gender and youth in the provision of water, sanitation and human settlements;**

(k) Enforce corporate responsibility for environmental protection;

(l) Adopt best practices on technological innovations available from the experiences of civil society organizations, including the use of indigenous knowledge for the provision of adequate housing, water and sanitation to the poor;

(m) Call upon development partners to honour their commitments, in particular the provision of 0.7 per cent of gross domestic product as official development assistance;

(n) Call upon the international community to fully implement debt swaps to support in-country programmes on water, sanitation and housing infrastructure;

(o) Request the international community to support the Global Shelter Assistance Facility to enable the United Nations Human Settlements Programme to assist African countries to implement slum-upgrading programmes;

(p) Call upon the international community to increase its support for NEPAD to assist African countries to meet their goals and objectives in water, sanitation and human settlements;

(q) Adopt and operationalize partnerships at local, national and international levels, as well as create an enabling environment for broader participation from all relevant stakeholders, including the private sector, in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and the provision of water and sanitation;

(r) Water and sanitation should be addressed within the framework of sustainable human settlement planning, development and management;

(s) Mainstream disaster management into the management of water, sanitation and human settlements.

Linkages between water, sanitation and human settlements

11. The meeting recognized the importance of linkages between water, sanitation and human settlements. It encouraged African countries to promote policies that integrate these sectors in their efforts to eradicate poverty and promote socio-economic goals. Its recommendations also addressed these linkages. Areas in which these linkages are more pronounced include the following:

- Rapid urbanization and the prevalence of slums
- Infrastructure development associated with water, sanitation and human settlements
- Decentralization and devolution of responsibility in the provision of basic services
- Capacity-building to support decentralization for the effective implementation of programmes and projects
- Need for integrated country teams involving key ministries for finance, budget and economic planning, housing, local government, water and environment, to

plan and implement all issues pertaining to water, sanitation and human settlements

Notes

[1] Report of the *United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: *Resolutions adopted by the Conference, resolution 1, annex II.*

[2] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), Istanbul, 3-14 June 1996* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.97.IV.6), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

[3] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

[4] General Assembly resolution S-25/2, annex.

Annex

Ministerial communiqué on the Pan-African Implementation and Partnership Conference on Water

1. The Pan-African Conference on Implementation and Partnership on Water was held in Addis Ababa from 8 to 12 December 2003. In addition there were parallel sessions dedicated to the review of Africa's regional implementation of Agenda 21, the Habitat Agenda and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation in preparation for the twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development in New York in April 2004.

2. The Conference was held under the auspices of the African Ministerial Council on Water, which also held its fourth ordinary session on 10 December 2003, in Addis Ababa.

Objective

3. The objective of the Conference was to appraise the performance of the water sector in Africa at the national, subregional and regional levels and to develop a programme for action to address the Millennium Development Goals, the targets on water and sanitation set at the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the Habitat Agenda. The meeting also sought to build and consolidate partnerships.

Organization of the Conference

4. The Conference was organized in segments, which included plenary and ministerial sessions, parallel thematic working groups and multi-stakeholder forums, complemented by exhibitions on water, sanitation and human settlements.

5. The Conference received goodwill messages from the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Meles Zenawi, His Royal Highness, the Prince of Orange, Borge Brende, Environment Minister of Norway and Chairman of the twelfth session of the Commission, as well as the heads of various United Nations agencies.

Highlights

6. Key recommendations emerging from the following thematic sessions were presented and discussed in plenary.

- Meeting basic needs water, sanitation and human settlements
- Water for food security
- Protecting ecosystems and livelihoods
- Managing risks: water and climate
- Financing water infrastructure
- Integrated water resource management/shared water resources
- Valuing and allocating water
- Ensuring water wisdom
- Governing water wisely

- Managing rapid urbanization
- Financing slum upgrading programmes and projects
- Decentralization and strengthening the role of local authorities
- Africa's contribution to the twelfth session of the Commission on water, sanitation and human settlements

7. The outcomes of the thematic sessions were reviewed and endorsed by the Ministers. Having reviewed the status of implementation, the Ministers endorsed the portfolio of programmes and projects, noting that they were subject to refinement and completion. In addition, the portfolio was discussed with various partners for support and funding. In this regard, the following partnership initiatives were launched:

- African Water Facility
- Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Initiative
- Africa/European Union Water Initiative
- Phase II of the Water for African Cities
- Group of Eight Action Plan on Water for Africa

8. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to taking concrete action to meet Africa's challenges on water, sanitation and human settlements, with a view to achieving sustainable development. They underscored the pivotal role of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as the framework for achieving this objective.

9. Recognizing the importance of partnerships, the Ministers called for enhancement and strengthening of partnerships within Africa, between Africa and the international community, and with other stakeholders.

10. Cognizant of the critical need for additional resources, the Ministers underscored the need for the mobilization of adequate resources, both internally and externally, for the execution of programmes and projects on water, sanitation and human settlements.

The way forward

11. The Ministers resolved to give priority attention to water, sanitation and human settlements as the entry point for the set of actions required to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and the goals and targets of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the Habitat Agenda.

12. The Ministers endorsed the outcome of the African Regional Implementation Forum as Africa's contribution to the twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, which will take place in New York in April 2004. The Ministers also agreed to present the recommendations of the Pan-African Implementation Conference on Water, Sanitation and Human Settlements to the extraordinary summit of the African Union in February 2004, in Tripoli.

13. The Ministers expressed their appreciation and gratitude to the Government and people of Ethiopia for their hospitality, as well as to the Economic Commission for Africa, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and other sponsors for organizing the Conference.